

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 AID-20 EB-11 SAJ-01 NIC-01 SCI-06

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R 251903Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9754
INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 661

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MX

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S TRIP TO EUROPE

REF: A. MEXICO 350 B. MEXICO 374 (NOTAL)

1. ON JANUARY 23 PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA REQUESTED TO CONSTITUTIONALLY NECESSARY PERMISSION OF CONGRESS TO LEAVE MEXICO ON FEBRUARY 1 IN ORDER TO ATTEND THE CLUB OF ROME MEETING IN SALZBURG FEBRUARY 4-5 AND TO PAY OTHER VISITS TO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. HE HAS ACCEPTED INVITATIONS FROM THE RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS TO VISIT AUSTRIA (VIENNA), THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, ITALY AND YUGOSLAVIA. ALSO SCHEDULED IS AN AUDIENCE WITH POPE PAUL VI.

2. IN VIENNA ECHEVERRIA PLANS TO VISIT THE IAEA AND IN ROME THE FAO. HIS PROGRAM CALLS ONLY FOR MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENTS AND FOREIGN MINISTERS, WITH NO APPEARANCES BEFORE PARLIAMENTS.

3. IN HIS REQUEST TO CONGRESS, ECHEVERRIA CHARACTERIZED THE
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CLUB OF ROME MEETING AS A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE

VIEWS WITH A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS OF "INDEPENDENT AND PEACEFUL" NATURE WHICH ARE NOT GREAT POWERS. MOREOVER, HE CONSIDERS THE MEETING AN EXCELLENT FORUM TO DISCUSS HIS MUCH-PUBLICIZED CHARTER OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF STATES.

4. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE FOR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS JANUARY 22, ECHEVERRIA MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

A. ON THE CHARTER: THE UN, "AS SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM HAS SAID", FORESEES APPROVAL OF THE CHARTER BY THE END OF THE YEAR. ECHEVERRIA BELIEVES THE CHARTER OFFERS PROTECTION TO RICH COUNTRIES AS WELL AS POOR.

B. EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET: STUDIES UNDER WAY ON POSSIBLE INCREASE IN RELATIONS BETWEEN EC AND MEXICO HAVE BEEN INTERRUPTED BY THE ENERGY CRISIS, BUT ECHEVERRIA STILL SOUNDS HOPEFUL.

C. DIVERSIFICATION OF TRADE: THIS TRIP, LIKE EARLIER ONES, REFLECTS ADMINISTRATION POLICY OF SEEKING BROADER TRADE RELATIONS FOR MEXICO.

5. THERE HAS BEEN WIDE PRESS COMMENT ON THE SCHEDULED AUDIENCE WITH THE POPE. IN CITED PRESS CONFERENCE, ECHEVERRIA SAID HE WANTS TO EXPRESS HIS GRATITUDE FOR THE POPE'S SUPPORT OF THE CHARTER.

6. COMMENT: IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT THE SCHEDULED TOUR WAS HASTILY CONCEIVED. IT FOLLOWS THE PATTERN OF ECHEVERRIA'S PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO ENHANCE MEXICAN PRESTIGE ABROAD AND TO PUSH HIS CHARTER. AT THIS POINT, NO OTHER SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES ARE EVIDENT AND THE RESULTS SEEM UNLIKELY TO BE OF TRANSCENDENTAL IMPORTANCE. SPECULATION THAT MEXICO MAY RENEW FORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN IS CLEARLY PREMATURE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC COOPERATION, FOREIGN RELATIONS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MEXICO00661
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740116/aaaaaogn.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. MEXICO 350 B. MEXICO 374 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 MAR 2002 by worrelsw>; APPROVED <12 APR 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S TRIP TO EUROPE
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, MX, XG, (ECHEVERRIA ALVAREZ, LUIS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005